

21A.216J

Reflection Paper topic #1
Due Wednesday, February 23, 2005 at 11 am

Instructions for reflection papers: Email a copy of your paper to our writing tutor, by class time and bring a hard copy of the paper to class. The writing tutor will add comments on form to the document, email them to me, and then I'll add comments on content, print them, and return them to you with grades within a week.

Topic #1

Up to this point in the course, we have been discussing bio-medical ethics as a “historical subject” (Rosenberg 1999: 37) that is situated or located at the nexus of history, culture, politics, and economics. We have also been asking questions about the politics of science, technology, and knowledge.

In this 2-page, 12-point font (I prefer “Times”), double-spaced paper, consider the following statement by Charles Rosenberg:

“There can be no decontextualized understanding of bioethical dilemmas; bioethics is definitionally contextual ... finding its origins in the search for particular solutions to visible social problems. *A decontextualized approach in bioethics is not simply a matter of disciplinary style; it is a political act*” (1999: 41, my emphasis).

Do you agree and why? Reflect on this statement in your paper and support your argument with reference to at least two of the following perspectives: medical anthropology (Marshall and Koenig), feminism/feminist theology/Christian theology (Haraway, Diniz and Vélez, Farley, McCormick), or history and philosophy of science (Rosenberg and Haraway).

Do not simply summarize the perspective of the authors. Make your own argument and state it in a very clear thesis in your introduction. Provide a conclusion even if it is as simple as two sentences. Your space is limited, so be efficient in how you make your argument, but please be specific. We will stop reading at 2.25 pages for the reflection papers so stay within the page limit – there is an art to writing concisely and clearly. I will post the best papers on the MIT server with permission of the author.

Citations

I want to be sure that I've taught you a standard, social science format of writing before the course concludes so we will practice this in the reflection and short papers.

When you cite an author, use the following style:

X asserts, "the quotation you are citing" (Author X year: page). Or, according to Rosenberg: "Quote" (year: page).

If your citation is longer than four lines, use the format in which you begin the quote

after skipping a line, in single space format, with a half-inch indentation on either side of your margins. You do not include quotation marks when the text is indented. Once your quote has come to an end you use the same bibliographic reference as given above. Of course, if your quotation starts as a full sentence you will capitalize it. If you're using the form "according to Rosenberg" and cite more than four lines of text you would place a colon after Rosenberg and then begin with your indented text, concluding with the reference as follows, but still without the use of quotation marks (Author Year: page).

Skip a space then begin your analysis of the quote here. For reflection papers you will not cite extensively, but you may do so in your short papers.

In general, I expect you to build your argument with clear, relevant citation of the source material that we have read up to this point. Do give me a full bibliography at the end of your short papers, but this is not necessary for the 2-page reflection papers unless you'd like the practice. In bibliographic references there are different styles for books and articles, but for now use this format or something equivalent:

Article in an edited volume:

Giddens, Anthony. 1999. "Political Theory and the Problem of Violence." In *The Politics of Human Rights*, ed. Obrad Savic for the Belgrade Circle Journal, pp. 245-257. London: Verso.

Article in a journal:

Manson, Joseph H. and Richard W. Wrangham. 1991. Intergroup Aggression in Chimpanzees and Humans. *Current Anthropology* 32(4): 369-390.

Book:

Tambiah, Stanley J. 1996. *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Good luck.

ECJ